MODERN
RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

BENJAMIN WISNER BACON

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Modern Religious Problems

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THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

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THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

I

WHEN WAS THE CHURCH FOUNDED?

DOES Christianity consist of the gospel preached *by* Jesus; or of the gospel preached *about* Jesus? The religious world of to-day is hotly debating this question, under such captions as "Jesus, or Paul?" "The Gospel of Peter, or the Gospel of Paul?" Much depends on the answer; and a satisfying answer is not easy. Jesus brought new light and hope to the religiously disinherited man by stripping religion of its artificialities and non-essentials, and reducing it to ultimate simplicity — the filial relation toward God, the brotherly relation toward man. This one principle

involved everything vital in the whole realm of duty and destiny. Its "easy yoke" was glad tidings to men heavy laden with the legalism of the scribes. Its filial confidence in a Father in heaven was "rest to the soul" for men obsessed with priestcraft and magic. Jesus perished as the champion of the plain men — the wage-earners, to whose class he belonged, the fishermen of Galilee, the "publicans and sinners" who followed and trusted him; of the plain man's "right to be called a son of God." He was dubbed by the orthodox "a friend of publicans and sinners," and he was crucified in the attempt to vindicate for the common people the full right of "sons" on the terms, and only on the terms, which the Father himself prescribes in the eternally living law "written on fleshly tables of the heart."[1]

[1] Matt. 11 : 25–30. The knowing and being known of God as sons should be understood in the light of Paul's use of the same phraseology, Gal. 4 : 6–9; I Cor. 1 : 20–21. Cf. also II Tim. 2 : 19.

The battle was fought in the arena of Judaism. Its issues were drawn between the petty sects and cliques and castes of that race, which but for its religious genius and literature would be rated only as one of the lesser peoples of Syria. If Jesus ever thought of it as concerning all humanity in its issues, save as humanity might become a penumbra — an adjunct — of the Jewish empire to which the nation then looked forward, it certainly was not till after his death that his disciples extended their view to this broader horizon.[1] Even then it was only after a struggle that threatened to disrupt the brotherhood, that the last limitations of a nationalistic view were broken down, and Christianity became "a world religion." This was the work of Paul.

[1] The Gospel of Matthew still remains nationalistic. Matt. 7:6; 10:5, 6, 23; 15:24. Its universalism (28:19, 20) must be understood in consonance with these earlier passages.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

Jesus had no idea of founding a new religion. The religion of his fathers, of Moses and the prophets, was to him the absolute religion. Only he saw in it the one deep *living* principle of divine fatherhood as that on which all the law and the prophets depended. All which interfered with that was "precepts and doctrines of men." He heard the Pharisee and his "blind leader," the scribe, quote from their book-divinity: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate,[1] and touch no unclean thing: and I will receive you and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." And over against this book-religion of precept and ceremonial he dared to set another will of the living God, a God accessible to the pure *in heart*. He assured those who imitated the loving-kindness of the All-merciful that they should be "sons and daughters

[1] The literal meaning of the word "Pharisee."

of the Highest."[1] This was Jesus' religion, his idea of duty and destiny. He did not inquire whether a science of comparative religion would trace the same deep principle in Greek poets and Oriental sages. Those who preached his gospel to the Gentiles did that. He did find it at the heart of "the law and the prophets."

Jesus' death was a catastrophe which forced upon his followers this inevitable alternative: either return to the synagogue in shamed acknowledgment of defeat and error; or else, loyal adherence to the old Leader and to his gospel in spite of all. God gave them power to choose right. Miraculously or otherwise, their eyes were opened to see that the victory had not been with scribes and priests, but with the champion of the plain man. Jesus' faith in God had proved a victory to overcome the world. They clung to him. They believed in him,

[1] With II Cor. 6 : 17–18, cf. Matt. 5 : 8; 43–45.

not only as the Son of God, but as the expected Son of man, the Judge of the world. Shortly after, the very leader of the reaction against them, the organizer of persecution against those who had dared to defy legalism and to proclaim forgiveness and the rights of "sonship" in the name of Jesus, — Saul of Tarsus, the man who represented the very incarnation of that sophisticated religiosity that had crucified Jesus, — was suddenly transformed into his most ardent, most devoted advocate. Paul took up the cause of the Leader of the Galileans because he had seen him in vision, a vision which recalls the apostrophe of his victim Stephen to the coming Judge. Paul does not seem to have ever laid eyes upon Jesus in the flesh; but he made Jesus' cause the cause of humanity. A zealot for the law, he proclaimed Jesus the champion of those without the law; as Judge indeed, but most of all as God-sent Redeemer. More than that,

Paul claimed it as a new and special revelation to himself that this redemption applied to "sinners of the Gentiles" as well as to "sinners" of the sons of Abraham.

This new "gospel of the uncircumcision" was the immediate fruit of Paul's own distinctive, personal experience. God had taught him in the most heart-searching soul-struggle of which man can be capable, by "manifesting his son in" him, that the redemption of man as such, as son of Adam, as heir to the universal struggle against a "law of sin and death in the members, warring against the law of the mind," finds its solution in Jesus' principle of faith. The revelation of Jesus as a glorified second Adam, "the Lord from heaven," was God's own endorsement. This gospel *about* Christ became to Paul "the power of God unto salvation to every one that trusteth, to the Jew first, but also to the Greek."

Which, then, is "the" gospel? Is it that proclaimed on the Mount of Beatitudes; or that proclaimed on Mars' Hill?[1] Is it the Way of faith which Jesus taught and exemplified? Or is it an embassage of reconciliation from God, resting on the demonstration of the Spirit and of power — miraculous or otherwise — by which God then indorsed, and still indorses, the teaching of his "Son"?[2] Is it the simplicity of absolute religion as God reveals it to "babes" which Jesus taught and vindicated? Or is it the doctrine that Jesus himself has been manifested with power as the Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead? Those who had known Christ after the flesh, of whom Peter is the great representative, naturally emphasized more what Jesus had done and taught. But however self-evidencing that

[1] Cf. Matt. 5 : 44, 45, with Acts 17 : 30, 31.

[2] What Hegel called "the representation of the divine idea in Jesus' life and fate."

gospel may be to us, to the Galilean apostles, as well as to Paul, the "new law" derived its authority from the miraculous indorsement of divine power which had accompanied it. The starting-point in both cases was the Resurrection.[1] Paul, who, if he had "known a Christ after the flesh, yet now would know him so no more," centres everything on the significance of the Cross and the Resurrection. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This drama of God's enacting, summed up in the words, "Christ that died, yea rather that was raised from the dead," eclipses all else in its light. It is a message of glad tidings to every victim of the Adamic curse of sin and death. This gospel *about* Jesus is also everlastingly self-verifiable to every man by the simple exercise of trust in the love which sent it.

[1] I Cor. 15: 1–11.

God sends in Jesus' name to "those who are yet weak" the Spirit, which is life, power, adoption, sanctification. The sign of apostleship is power.[1]

Surely neither gospel is complete without the other. Jesus taught the Way; he *was* it, both by revealing the truth and by conveying the life. But the ultimate test question is whether men do now "come to the Father by" him. The demonstration of the Spirit and of power, from Pentecost to the last redeemed waif of New York's slums, is the present-day, living gospel, without which even the teaching of Jesus is only a teaching of the past.

And if there are two aspects of the gospel, so there are also two ways of conceiving the founding of the Church. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And yet it is

[1] II Cor. 12:12; Gal. 2:7–9; Luke 24:49; Mark 16:15–18, 20; Heb. 2:3, 4.

certain that Jesus had no idea of founding what we mean by the Church. He expected the "little flock" that he had gathered around him to endure as such, but only till the Father's purpose "to give them the kingdom" was fulfilled; and this he expected before the passing of that generation. He did not expect them to go out of Israel. He expected Israel, after a period of rejection, to yield to their plea — or else be destroyed.

Most scholars still maintain, in spite of critical opposition, that in the last weeks of his life, at first only to his intimates, and under strict pledge of secrecy, Jesus assumed the rôle of Messiah, "the king of Israel."[1] All, of every shade of opinion, will admit that if the title Messiah was assumed at all, it was in a sense which to his contemporaries would seem figurative. We believe it to have been assumed; but

[1] John 1 : 49.

in a purely ethical-religious sense, an older sense than the monarchical.

Israel was to be God's "son." That was the essence of the Messianic hope, a hope which antedates the monarchy. "Sonship" was the ideal to which Jesus sought to lead. If "Messiah" could be made to mean "He who brings Israel into the relation of sons to their father," Jesus could welcome the title with all its dangers. As "the"[1] son he knew the Father, and could reveal him by far better right than the most learned scribe of unfilial spirit. On behalf of all the disinherited he must claim to the full the rights of a "son of the Highest." But the only title on which he permits the claim to be rested is ethical, — participation in the nature and disposition of the All-merciful. Whosoever would do the will revealed in

[1] The article in Matt. 11 : 27 is generic, as in John 8 : 35, "*the* bond servant abideth not in the house forever, but *the* son abideth forever." The use of a capital S is misleading.

this Father's goodness, he welcomed as a brother, sister, mother.[1]

There was, then, already a brotherhood in Jesus' time. And its "law" of mutual service was formulated. The "bond of perfectness" which Paul makes the basis of a new sociology did not have to be invented for the Churches of Asia. "Whosoever would be greatest among you, let him be your minister" was "the law of Christ." "They were together and had all things common," even before Jesus' death. Yes, even then they had a "breaking of bread and prayers." At the last moment, Jesus used the existent custom of their fraternal meal[2] as a symbol of this principle of union

[1] Mark 3:35.

[2] From Luke 24:35 it appears that the custom of Jesus was known outside the circle of the Twelve. In John 6:52–59 the sacrament of the body is even connected with the Galilean institution of the Agapé, or church banquet, rather than with its sequel, the "communion" of the Lord's cup. See below, p. 81.

by mutual service, and asked to be remembered by it.[1] He made them one body in him. But the word "church" never occurs in the gospels, save in two passages of Matthew, one textually doubtful, both recognized by all modern students as belonging to that element of Matthew which is latest and has the least claim to authenticity.[2] If Jesus used this Greek word at all, it could only be in its Old Testament sense, not in the sense it gained through the Pauline propaganda. In Matthew 18: 18 we have a mere rule of ecclesiastical procedure, cast in the form of a command of Jesus. In Matthew 16: 19 we have at best a prediction of the future, whose significance could only transpire after Jesus' death. In one of the oldest witnesses to the text, no reference to "the Church" appears. There

[1] I Cor. 11: 23–26.

[2] On the passages Matt. 16: 19 and 18: 18, see chapter ii, p. 85.

was, then, a "brotherhood" even in Galilee. It had a principle of coherence. It even had certain rites and observances. But it had no sense of its real mission until it became conscious of a work entrusted to it, together with power to fulfill that mission. Then it became the Church. Until the crucifixion, not one of that brotherhood dreamed of any other agency than Israel as charged with the mission of redemption. If they conceived Jesus in any sense or degree as the Redeemer, it was only by virtue of being placed at the head of this Old Testament "church," the people of Israel.[1] Not by any possibility could the idea arise in the disciples' minds of "founding" another Church, until this "church" had definitively rejected the Redeemer, and made it impossible to hope for the achievement of the divine design along the lines of nationalism.

[1] The Greek translators of the Pentateuch use the word for the Mosaic commonwealth.

However strong, therefore, the disposition to carry back the later institution into the period of Jesus' earthly life, and find authority for it there in his own sayings and example, nothing can be more certain than that "the Church," as we understand the word, is an outgrowth of Jesus' rejection and crucifixion, as these were reacted against by the faith and loyalty of his followers.

In spite of the unavoidable tendency just referred to, to carry back later beliefs and institutions and justify them, by showing them present, at least potentially and in germ, in Jesus' earthly practice and teaching, it is remarkable to how large a degree the New Testament sources connect the origins of the faith with what happened *after* Jesus' death.

We have noticed how the Pauline letters — by far our earliest and most authentic sources — make the doctrine of the risen and

spiritual Christ *on principle* the essence of the gospel. Those who fail to realize that the sign of apostleship was "power," that the Christian missionary stood simply upon what he could *do* in the name of Christ, are astonished as they read Paul's letters to find the almost utter absence of any allusion to Jesus' earthly career. There is no mention of a single mighty work. There are a bare half-dozen references to his sayings. The whole substance of the message is that God commendeth his love to sinners by the death of his Son, whom he has revealed as such with power by the resurrection.[1] As many as are led by the Spirit are also sons. The Spirit has been given to those who have faith in Jesus. Its presence is manifest *now;* why should they look back?

The narrative tradition is almost equally

[1] Rom. 1:4. According to the *International Critical Commentary, ad loc.*, the words "with power" should be construed with the verb "revealed," not with the noun "the Son."

emphatic in its testimony as to when the Church began. Mark inserts, it is true, a preliminary list of the Twelve Apostles, in the story of Galilee, and the gospels based on his follow his example. Matthew even attaches to this account of the "sending forth" a full prediction of the propaganda in the world, the endowment with the Spirit, the persecution to be endured, the "witness [*martyria*] before governors and kings," down to the "coming of the Son of man."[1] But the very extent of the anticipation shows that the chapter on the "sending" (Matt. 10) is not framed with a historical, but with a practical purpose. The writer only uses the form of narrative to exhibit and justify the apostolate as it exists in his own time. The Twelve are equipped and sent forth, but they never return. The evangelist leaves them still working in the world. The fourth gospel, following perhaps a hint

[1] Mark 3 : 13–19; 6 : 7–13; cf. Matt. 9 : 35–10 : 42.

of the third,[1] finds a more appropriate place for the "sending" in Jesus' farewell discourse.[2] All the gospels culminate with the great commission into all the world; for the purpose of their composition is to justify the message. Matthew himself atones for his measure of anticipation by repeating his account of the "sending" at the close of his gospel. Mark's original ending is wanting; but its loss has been made good by appendices from two different sources. Both appendices, the "longer" and the "shorter" ending, concern themselves mainly or exclusively with the equipment of the Twelve with power and authority, and their "sending."[3] John's original conclusion is the

[1] Luke 22 : 35–38.

[2] John 14–16. Cf. especially John 13 : 16, 20 with Matt. 10 : 24, 40; John 14 : 17 with Matt. 10 : 20; John 15 : 20 with Matt. 10 : 24; and John 15 : 26–16 : 4 with Matt. 10 : 16–23.

[3] Mark 16 : 14–20, based on Luke. The so-called "shorter ending" is based on Matthew. It reads as follows: "And they [the women] briefly reported all the message to Peter and those with him. And afterwards Jesus himself sent forth

same equipment with authority and sending "even as the Father sent me."[1] "Luke," the one evangelist who has actually related the story of the Church in its founding and propaganda, and who rests his "former treatise" on Mark, makes that treatise culminate with the command to the Twelve to "tarry in Jerusalem until" they "be endued with power from on high." Thereafter he devotes his entire second treatise to the report of the "sending," the equipment with the Spirit and power, and its results. The first item of his story is a new list of the Twelve independent of Mark, with the completion of the number.[2]

through them from the east even to the west the holy and incorruptible proclamation of eternal salvation."

[1] John 20:21–23.

[2] Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:1–8, 13, 21–26. The Ebionites, or Palestinian Christians, of the second century employed a composite gospel, made up of our Synoptics combined with others unknown to us. It spoke in the name of the Twelve. "There came a man, Jesus by name, . . . who chose us." Then followed the list of names, ending, "And thee Mat-

If we ask what light on the founding of the Church we gain from the rite of initiation, we find that it is not pretended by any narrator that it was in use during Jesus' earthly life. The direction to baptize came to the disciples by revelation, after Jesus' death. Externally it was admittedly a loan from John the Baptist.[1] Its new Christian content, endowment with the Spirit, was a post-resurrection experience. Paul even went so far as to say that his "sending" by Christ included no command to baptize.[2]

Our conclusion then must be that the beginning of the conscious life of the Church was its endowment with power through

thew . . . I chose, and thou followedst me. You twelve then I will to be Apostles for witness to Israel."

[1] Aphraates, the ancient Syriac homilist, gives the true sense of John 3 : 26, when he says, "For during all the time that he went about with his disciples, they were baptized only with the baptism of the priestly law, with the baptism at which John said, Repent of your sins."

[2] On the origin of the institutions of the Church, see Chapter IV.

conviction that God had raised Jesus from the dead. The apostolate is the witness of the resurrection. Paul's gospel and that of the Galilean apostles were as wide apart as contemporary gospels could possibly be. But in one point they came together. Whether it were he or they, thus it was preached, and thus men believed.[1] God had given assurance unto all men of repentance and forgiveness before the coming of Christ as Judge, "in that he hath raised him from the dead."[2] An unconscious life the Church had while Jesus was with them in the flesh, and in later days the tendency grew stronger and stronger to carry back to the germs and intimations of that time whatever proved to be of divine worth in her subsequent development. "When Jesus was glorified, then remembered they" that these things had

[1] I Cor. 15 : 1–11.

[2] Acts 17 : 30–31. The accuracy of this representation of Paul's missionary preaching is confirmed by himself, I Thess. 1 : 9–10.

happened thus and so.[1] Her life might be called but half-conscious during all the period covered by the Book of Acts, during which the gospel of Peter was endeavoring to adjust itself to the larger gospel of Paul. Perhaps it is still not fully conscious. But there is one definite critical moment which marks the founding of the Church, if by that we mean the emergence of the Christian brotherhood into a consciousness of its separate existence and mission to the world. It is the "turning again" of Simon Peter. Down to the moment when the risen Lord "appeared to Cephas," the cause of Jesus never rose before the world as its day-star. Even as Israel's, it had set in utter darkness. Not a follower remained. There was nothing whatever to justify the hope that Jesus' words would not now "pass away" as scribe and priest were convinced they would — nothing but the prayer: "Simon,

[1] John 12 : 16.

I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. And when thou art turned again, stablish thy brethren." The rock foundation of the Church was the faith of Simon Peter.

II

PETER THE FOUNDATION ROCK

STRANGE as it may seem, every direct account of the first manifestation of the risen Christ has disappeared from the records of the Church. In the great Epistles of Paul we are able to overleap half the chasm of obscurity which separates the earliest of our narratives from the actual event, and there, in First Corinthians, the most indubitably established and authentic of all documents in the archives of Christianity, we find a summary of the current teaching of the Church on the resurrection. Whatever differences existed on other points, on the evidences of the resurrection all were agreed, says Paul. These evidences consisted of a series of manifestations of the risen Christ, first "to Cephas," "last of all to me

also." The story of the visit of the women to the sepulchre, the empty tomb, the vision of angels, the manifestation of Jesus to Mary Magdalene and other women, does not appear at all!

Gradually the relation is reversed. The story as it appears twenty years later in our earliest gospel narrative has lost already the account of the manifestation to Peter, though it still retains indubitable traces of having once contained it. In Canonical Mark (an adaptation of the original narrative) there now remains no manifestation of the risen Christ whatever. In place of it we are given a story of women having found the sepulchre empty on the third day after the crucifixion. A "vision of angels" predicts, however, that his disciples "and Peter" *will* see him in Galilee. But the sequel which related this momentous interview has been suppressed in its turn. In the most authentic manuscripts the Gospel ends with the frightened silence

of the women, which accounts of course for this late appearance of the story. The women had been "afraid," and so "said nothing to any man."

Second-century hands supply diverse endings to complete this obviously mutilated Gospel. One is based on Matthew 28: 16–20.[1] The other rests on John 20: 11–18 and Luke 24: 13–53, with a brief synopsis of Acts.

Matthew enlarges still more on the story of the empty sepulchre. It had met opposition, and this must be answered. We need not delay upon Matthew's added features of the guard and the earthquake. We are interested in the promised manifestation in Galilee to "his disciples and Peter." Matthew tells it. He even prepares the way for it by changing Mark's statement, about the women's fear preventing their delivering their message, into "And they departed

[1] See above, p. 19.

quickly from the tomb with fear *and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.*" This enables him to bring in the scene of Jesus' appearing to the eleven disciples in "the mountain where Jesus had appointed them," and giving them the Apostolic Commission.[1] But there is no more indication in this vague and generalizing statement that the evangelist possessed the lost story of Jesus' appearance to "Peter and the rest," than in the case of the second-century framers of endings for Mark. Indeed, there is clear evidence that he did not, but is only restoring by conjecture. After having changed in 28:8, the last verse of the authentic Mark as above described, he introduces in 28:9, 10 another perfectly independent, and now of course perfectly superfluous, explanation of how the disciples met the appointment in spite of the women's terrified silence. "Jesus himself"

[1] Matt. 28:16–20.

appeared to the women, told them not to be afraid, but to deliver their message, and then reiterated it in the very words of the angel. Matthew, we see, had a predecessor in the attempt to mend the rents of Mark.

But we have evidence from several independent sources that the earlier form of the tradition did *not* bring the scattered disciples together by the word of the women. That word never got to them. Mark means it when he says, "They said nothing to any man because they were afraid." The recently discovered fragment of the "Gospel of Peter" breaks off most tantalizingly at almost the very point of the mutilation of Mark; not, however, before it has made it perfectly clear that the disciples remained in utter ignorance of the experiences of the women, and returned sorrowfully, in broken groups, to their fishing in Galilee.

Our third Gospel is the most radical in its method of healing the mutilation of Mark, so as to account for the prompt founding of the Church by the Twelve in Jerusalem, in spite of the fact that at last accounts they had simply scattered as sheep when the Shepherd is smitten. Luke simply denies the "scattering" *in toto*. They never fled at all. They remained in Jerusalem. The angel did not say, "He goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him." He (or rather "they"; for Luke has two angels) said, "Remember ye not how he said *while he was yet in Galilee*, that . . . he must rise again." Hence even those of the outer penumbra of discipleship who sought to leave Jerusalem were turned back. There were no manifestations in Galilee. Jesus commissioned the eleven disciples in Jerusalem, and bade them stay there and make it headquarters for the work of evangelization. This is restoration

with sweeping strokes of a large brush. But it does not obliterate the older lines. More of these remain, in fact, in Luke's than in any other Gospel. He fails to explain how Peter, who at last accounts[1] had lingered longest and fallen deepest, is all at once the leader and master spirit of all. Nay, Luke makes "the eleven" say in so many words to Cleopas and his companion, as they come in from their experience at Emmaus, "The Lord is risen indeed, *and hath appeared unto Simon.*" He has embodied a direct reference to that fundamental first manifestation "to Cephas," and yet has left out the story of it!

We have in Luke even distincter traces than these. Mark made the rallying of the disciples in Galilee a work accomplished by Jesus' personal intervention as chief Shepherd of the flock. Jesus promised that after they had been "scattered" by the

[1] Luke 22 : 54–62.

stroke which fell upon him, he would "go before them into Galilee." Luke records instead a prayer of Jesus, which would not be recorded if at some later time it had not been regarded as fulfilled by the event; and this prayer commits the work of rallying the scattered flock to the under-shepherd, Peter.[1] The counter statement to Jesus' prediction at the Last Supper of the sifting of Satan which Peter was to undergo is the statement, "But I have made supplication for thee, Simon, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren." This ancient fragment is all the more significant from the cancellation, by the evangelist who embodies it, of the story which gave it pertinence.

The latest of all the Gospels was in its original form the most completely diverted from what we may designate the Galilean

[1] Luke 22 : 24–32.

form of the tradition, the most consistently committed to the later, Jerusalemic, form. If we take the Gospel of John *without the appendix* (ch. 21), it excludes all the story of dispersion and return from Galilee even more completely than Luke. It develops the trait of the women reporting the empty tomb to the eleven, and Peter's verification of it, at the greatest length and in its own special interest.[1] It combines with this, in similar elaboration, the feature embodied by Matthew of Jesus' appearance to the women to counteract their fear, and upon this it brings in as culmination the Apostolic Commission.[2] On appointment made through Mary Magdalene, Jesus meets the disciples in Jerusalem, breathes upon them the Spirit, clothes them with authority to forgive sins, and sends them forth into the world even as the Father had sent

[1] With Luke 24 : 10–12, cf. John 20 : 1–10.

[2] John 20 : 11–18, 19–23.

him. The ascension has preceded.[1] With the appearance, the clothing with authority to "bind and loose," and the "sending," there remains no more to tell. The gospel is complete, and receives its appropriate envoi in verses 30–31.

It is a new writer, with a new motive and a new conception, who adds the appendix (ch. 21). Here the eleven are not together, but only a group of seven, Peter in the lead. They are not in Jerusalem, but back in Galilee, engaged in their old occupation of fishing. They have received no "sending," have not been commissioned, have heard of no appointment through the women, are taken with absolute surprise and awe as

[1] This is implied in verse 17. We are to understand that Mary sees Jesus at the very moment of his ascension (verse 14). It takes place on the day of the resurrection as in *Ep. of Barn.*, xv: 8, 9 and *Ev. Petri*, x: 38–42. We so understand Luke 24 : 51; Acts 1 : 6–11 also. Others think there is contradiction between Luke 24 : 51 and Acts 1 : 6–11. See Bacon, "The Ascension in Luke and Acts," *Expositor*, March, 1909.

the thought dawns upon "the disciple whom Jesus loved," "It is the Lord." Peter has not yet been forgiven and reinstated; he has yet to receive a threefold warning for his threefold denial, and then to be charged with the care of the flock, until he be able at last to "follow" as he had sought to do and failed.[1] This sudden reappearance of the discarded Galilean form of the tradition, after the close of the Johannine Gospel proper, can be accounted for in but one way. It is a "survival." The old account of Peter's "turning again" in Galilee and "stablishing his brethren," the original manifestation "to Cephas," reasserts its rights against a too presumptuous rival. To obtain general circulation for this late Gospel, its final editors had to make larger concessions than its text affords to the historic claims of Peter's leadership.

We have traversed the whole story of

[1] John 21 : 1–14, 15–17, 18–19; cf. 13 : 36–38.

the Church's tradition in its changing forms. We have seen how it gave account of that great reaction which turned the tide of defeat and disaster into the victory of faith, beginning with Paul's account of the manifestations. The risen Christ appeared first "to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to above five hundred brethren at once . . . then to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all to me also." We have seen the coming in upon this primitive common gospel of the special tradition of the women's discovery of the empty tomb and their "vision of angels." At first it is most modest, almost apologetic. Then it develops in many forms. At last it threatens to uproot entirely the story of Peter's turning again in Galilee and stablishing his brethren. Of course. What could be so grateful to the growing desire for the concrete and tangible as the story of an actual disappearance of the body? What could be more

unacceptable to the Church's growing pride in its great apostles, than the old story how "they all forsook him and fled," how they were scattered each one to his own, how not one of them had left a spark of hope or courage, or even bethought him of Jesus' faith in God, until "he appeared to Cephas."

The story of Peter's turning again has been lost; and the loss was *not* accidental. We have too many varied efforts to repair the mutilation of the fundamental record, too many evidences of what later hands *preferred* to the ancient story, to imagine it to have been lost by simultaneous accident out of all existing records. No; the Jerusalemic story of the empty tomb and women's vision of angels has taken its place. But whether we give credence to this later tradition or not, nothing can be more certain than that it had nothing whatever to do with the real reaction, the

actual historic dawn of the resurrection faith. In Paul's time it is either unknown or purposely ignored. When it does at last appear, it does not claim to have come to light in time to affect in any way the actual "turning again" and "stablishing of the brethren." That was acknowledged to have been the work of Peter. So too as to the character of the manifestations. In First Corinthians Paul begins the resurrection record with the manifestation to Peter, and closes it with that to himself. In Galatians he compares his "apostleship" with Peter's, and declares that God who "manifested his Son in" him, "energizing in him" thus "unto an apostleship of the Gentiles," "energized in like manner in Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision."[1] To neither one was the revelation from "flesh and blood," but from the Father in heaven. It was not the mere

[1] Gal. 1 : 16; 2 : 8.

"wonder" of a vacant tomb, but the apprehension of a living, spiritual, glorified Lord.

Fortunately these obscure references of Paul to the revelation of God's Son to Peter are not our only sources of information. Remembering the disposition of the later Church to carry back into the full daylight of Jesus' earthly career all that belonged to its established faith and institutions, we shall find, in addition to the passages from the Gospels already considered, more than one clew to the nature of Peter's revelation, Peter's failure and turning again, Peter's faith, once lost, but afterwards made the foundation rock of the Church. These will prove that the disappearance of the ancient story of how "the Lord appeared unto Simon" was a disappearance in form rather than in substance. As to form, we can only approximate the actual story. We may be sure from the hints that remain that

its scene was the Sea of Galilee. Peter, with some of his old partners, had returned to his fishing. They were not looking for a return of their crucified Master. They were "weeping and lamenting and grieving," as "each one returned to his own home"; and Simon and Andrew his brother "took up their nets and went away to the sea, having with them Levi the son of Alpheus," and perhaps others.[1] Then came the great revulsion. Jesus had called Peter there, on that shore, in those same surroundings, to "catch men." One form of the story of the new call relates that in the dusk of dawn, after a night of fruitless toil, the disciple saw Jesus on the shore, and the Master symbolized the new and greater work he was now to do by a miraculous draught of fishes.[2] Luke, who, as we saw, has cancelled all this Galilean episode, could find no place for Peter's sec-

[1] The quotations are from the fragment of the *Gospel of Peter* 14 : 58–60.

[2] John 21 : 1–11.

ond call, save as he carried it back in 5 : 1–11, and connected it with Mark's narration of the first. The connection is lame enough, for the pathos of Peter's repentant cry, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," is lost. Moreover, the introduction of "James and John which were partners with Simon" in verse 10, is almost grotesque, for they have no part in the interview. It is only "Simon" to whom Jesus speaks, and whom he calls and comforts. But we may take this Lukan adaptation of the story of Peter's restoration as typical of many. It reveals how the substance was retained throughout the changes of form. We know that the "manifestation" of the risen Lord to Peter after he had returned in shame and despair to his fishing was in its significance equivalent to Paul's. It had the same relation to Peter's individual sense of sin and despair. It was also essentially a manifestation "in" him, whatever the extent of

its objectivity, a vision of Jesus, shown to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection. This is suggested by Paul's comparisons of it to his own.[1] Finally, it was a renewal of Peter's call. It was an apostleship, a "sending." Peter was to take up again in Jesus' name the old-time message of repentance, faith, and forgiveness — but with what wonder and power of new meaning!

There is another point of attachment in our Gospels besides that of Peter's call for the story of the final triumph of his faith. At Cæsarea Philippi, after Jesus had been driven out of Galilee and was setting his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem to champion the cause of the "little ones" at the very seat of priestly usurpation, something brought a great rebuke upon Peter. It was either the suggestion of messianic aspirations in general, or at least the suggestion

[1] I Cor. 15: 5, 8; Gal. 2: 8.

of it in too worldly a sense. Later Christian faith, carrying back its own origin to the earliest attainable date, laid hold of this as its beginning. Even Mark's earlier form of the story, which has nothing of Matthew's development of it into a revelation of the Messiahship, follows it nevertheless with the account of a "vision" or "revelation," in which "Peter and they that were with him" were taught by a voice from heaven what is the true nature and calling of Jesus. He is the glorified Lord into the likeness of whose body of glory we all, as Paul taught, must be "metamorphosed." [1] We are not surprised to find the evangelist connecting the significance of this story with "the rising again from the dead," nor even that, in the recently discovered "Revelation of Peter," the incident is placed *after the resur-*

[1] Mark 9 : 2–10. The expression, "he was transfigured," is identical with that used by Paul in II Cor. 3 : 8. On the origin and significance of the Transfiguration "vision" see Bacon, *Beginnings of Gospel Story*, pp. 114 ff.

rection. It is the risen, the glorified Christ, the Son of God with power, who is revealed in it to "Peter and them that were with him." The connection with the Rebuke of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi is merely editorial.[1]

If, then, with Matthew's version of Peter's Confession of Jesus as the Christ at Cæsarea

[1] In Matt. 14: 22–33 the same evangelist who supplements Mark's Confession of Peter with an ordination of him as the Foundation of the Church, supplements the Markan story of the Breaking of the Bread and Walking on the Sea with an undertaking of Peter to tread the stormy waves with Jesus, a failure of his faith, rescue by the personal intervention of the Lord, and return of Peter in company with Jesus to the distressed disciples, who "worshipped him saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." For many convergent reasons we are convinced that this story merely reflects in symbolic form the undertaking of Peter at the "last supper" to go with Jesus "unto prison and death," the subsequent failure of his faith, "when he saw that the winds were boisterous," his restoration by the manifestation to him of the risen Christ, and the "stablishment of his brethren in faith in the Son of God." We should thus have in allegorical form a surviving narrative of the "appearance to Peter." Space, however, is lacking for the adequate proof of the theory, which is accordingly here presented in outline and as a possibility only, without embodying it in the text.

Philippi, we find interwoven a parallel to Paul's declaration of his apostleship, not from "flesh and blood," but by revelation from the Father of Christ as the Son of God; and find together with this a declaration that the Church is to be founded upon this Rock, and that it shall triumph over the gates of Hades which had closed upon the crucified Leader; and if, further, we find Peter now clothed with the authority to forgive sins, the apostolic power of "binding and loosing" which shortly after appears as a prerogative of the Church,[1] and in other sources forms the essence of the great Commission,[2] we shall not be greatly surprised. We shall see in Matthew's story of the Founding of the Church simply one more example of that carrying back of later faiths to the earlier time of which the Gospels are full. We shall realize that here, too, we are

[1] Matt. 16:19 = 18:18.

[2] John 20:23; Luke 24:47; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16.

dealing with that one great crisis out of which our religion was born, the triumph of that humble Galilean's faith in the Master whose call to be a fisher of men could never be silenced in his ears. The new faith found embodiment when Simon Peter "turned again and stablished his brethren."

III

THE CONFESSION OF JESUS AS LORD

If we follow again the regular historian's method of judging later narratives by earlier and more authentic documents, we shall resort again to the great and undisputed Pauline Epistles in seeking to answer the question: What was the essential content of that faith in Jesus which made Christians otherwise so diverse in training, in knowledge, and in religious experience, as Paul and the Galilean apostles, feel that nevertheless they were "one body in Christ, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Father of all," one all-pervading, all-vivifying Spirit?[1]

There are several instances in which Paul seems to be voicing the watchword

[1] Eph. 4: 4-6.

of the common faith. Thus in Romans 10:9 he summarizes "the word of faith which we preach" as follows: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as LORD, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Again, in defending the "ministry of the new covenant," he introduces a poetically beautiful allusion to his own vision of the risen Jesus, a "new creation" of the spirit, with this explanation: "For we (ministers of the new covenant) preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as LORD, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."[1] Similarly, in warning the Corinthians against misleading "spirits," he lays down as a general principle of discrimination that "no man can say, 'Jesus is LORD' but in the Holy Spirit."[2] Finally, in his swan-song of farewell to the beloved church in Philippi,

[1] II Cor. 4:5-6.
[2] I Cor. 12:3.

pouring out every entreaty to them to be united in "the mind which was also in Christ Jesus," he declares that it was because of the disposition of self-denying service exemplified in Jesus' life and death, that God "gave unto him the name which is above every name," making even angels and archangels "confess that he is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." It is needless to multiply further instances to prove that Paul attached to this confession that "Jesus is LORD" a fundamental significance.

One of the earliest embodiments of faith in the risen Jesus is certainly the Danielic title "Son of man," i. e., the Judge and ruler of the world awaited in apocalyptic expectation. Certain phenomena of the Gospels have even led scholars to declare that this was "the favorite self-designation of Jesus." For ourselves we cannot share this view. It rhymes but ill with the predominantly ethical and religious note of the Sermon on

the Mount. While we need have no doubt that Jesus, like John the Baptist, like his fellow Jews, anticipated the coming of this transcendental Being, the notion that he looked forward to fulfilling this office in his own person is not in line with his teachings generally; for in these the sonship of the many, not the Judgeship of the one, holds the keynote. Still greater obstacles are met in the earliest records of all. Had this title expressed to Paul the fundamental doctrine of Christ's person, he could have made it intelligible to his Greek hearers. It is not more difficult to translate from its Aramaic form than "Messiah" or "election." The words "abba," "amen," "maranatha," are taken over without translation. It is not, then, because the expression "Son of man" was not adaptable to Paul's work of evangelization that it never occurs in his writings or in any New Testament author outside the four evangelists. It is a different title which

in the epistles expresses the dignity conferred by God upon him whom he had declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. "Jesus is LORD" was the primitive confession. And "Lord" was not a substitute for some other "favorite self-designation of Jesus" in the Aramaic. It was itself transferred in the original tongue, *un*translated, in such primeval watchwords of the Church as *Maran*-atha, "our LORD cometh." To Stephen, condemned by unjust judges, the vision of the risen Christ may well have been a vision of "the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God"; but to the despairing love of repentant Peter it will have been, as to Saul of Tarsus, the vision of a glorified Leader and Deliverer of lost humanity. The title which the Church disputes in bloody conflict with Roman emperors, with heathen demi-gods and divinities, and with Jewish angels

and archangels, is "Lordship," not the mere apocalyptic dignity of the Son of man.

If now we turn from the Epistles of Paul to the narrative of Luke, we shall find deep harmony on this fundamental point. Luke, as we saw, has cancelled the humiliating interlude of the flight of the apostles to Galilee after the crucifixion. Instead of the formal scene in the first chapter of Acts, of Jesus' visible ascension to heaven after having delivered the Apostolic Commission, a scene which is immediately followed by completion of the number of the twelve on the Mosaic plan of casting lots, we must accept the successive incidents enumerated by Paul in I Corinthians 15: 5–7. After the "turning again" of Simon came the "stablishing" of his "brethren." The "manifestation" to Cephas was followed, still in Galilee, if we may trust the remaining traces of primitive story, by a manifestation "to

the twelve." Is Paul here speaking of a group formed by Jesus during his lifetime for missionary purposes? Then we do need the explanation Luke endeavors to furnish of the filling of the traitor's place. We should expect Paul to say, as Luke does, "the eleven." But tradition varies widely as to the numbers and names, and the intentions of Jesus in forming his inner circle of disciples, to which we now find assigned this symbolic number. There are phenomena which to the historical critic suggest that here too the specific number twelve[1] is carried back from the later to the earlier time. Paul means by "the twelve" the group formed at this time out of the number of those who had companied with Jesus, beginning from the baptism of John, a group now brought together, perhaps for the first time, under the leadership of Peter. They

[1] Rev. 21: 14 places the symbolic significance beyond doubt.

too received a "manifestation." What steps they took thereafter we may infer from the numbers mentioned in the next "manifestation." "More than five hundred brethren" were gathered together at one time. The place can scarcely have been other than Jerusalem, where the Church felt from the first that it must await the Lord's return. The occasion is reasonably conjectured to have been no other than that "Lord's day" of Pentecost to which the origins of the conscious life of the Church are carried back in Acts. To the five hundred also there was granted a "manifestation" of the risen Lord. If it was in Jerusalem at Pentecost, this manifestation was accompanied with the "outpouring of the Spirit" in phenomena of "tongues," "prophesying," and other "spiritual gifts." Upon it followed two "manifestations" to special functionaries in the brotherhood, "to James," the Lord's brother, whose figure already in the

Pauline Epistles, begins to overtop even that of Peter, — and "to all the apostles." These latter in Pauline phraseology form a much larger group than "the twelve." [1] What their function was, and why it was needful that they should have "seen the Lord," [2] hardly requires explanation. Such is the story of the first organization for propagation of the new faith, as we restore it from the earliest allusions.

Luke's recasting of the story to suit his fundamental cancellation, makes wide differences in form between the Pauline record and his own. The "idealization" which it has undergone at his hands is matter of universal admission among scholars. But the fundamental elements of his story, especially those which, like the speech of Peter in Acts 2: 14–36, embody conceptions at variance with the more elaborate, artificial, and thaumaturgic representations

[1] Rom. 16: 7; I Thess. 2: 6. [2] I Cor. 9: 1.

of the framework,[1] exhibit precisely that elemental "gospel" which we have traced in Paul. Just as in Ephesians 4: 4–16 the "gifts of the Spirit" are appealed to as proof of Jesus' ascension to a seat of supreme and heavenly authority "at the right hand of God," so the phenomena of "tongues," "prophesyings," "wonders and signs" are appealed to in Acts 2: 14–36, to prove that Jesus has experienced that which was written in the Psalms concerning his being raised from the grave, and seated on the throne of glory, "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet."[2]

In every one of the three quotations from

[1] Notoriously the "prophesying" and "glossolaly" of Acts 2: 15–18, 26; 11: 15 are the well-known psychological phenomena so abundantly recognizable in I Cor. 14, *not* the polyglot utterance understood by the compiler in vv. 4–11.

[2] The use of Ps. 110: 1 in Mark 12: 35–37 as part of *Jesus'* refutation of the scribes seems to the present writer later than that in Paul and Acts. See *Beginnings of Gospel Story*, 1909, p. 175.

Scripture on which the reported discourse of Peter is based, it is the Lordship given to Jesus which forms the climax. The prophesyings, the wonders in heaven and signs on earth, are tokens of the promised "Day of the Lord." Their purpose is to lead men near and far to "call upon the name of the Lord," and thus be saved.[1] The "glad hearts" and "rejoicing tongues" are those of which David spoke when he "foresaw the Lord before his face," and spoke of God's deliverance of the soul of his Holy One from the corruption of the underworld.

That which the people now "see and hear" is the proof that God has raised up Jesus to his "right hand," to be "the Lord" of David, and that he has "received of the Father" the promised Spirit of prophecy, the expected "gift of God" of the messianic

[1] Paul employs the same Scripture (Joel 2 : 32) in Rom. 10 : 13.

times.[1] The climax and peroration of the speech is this: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." The Galilean followers of Jesus have seen him glorified, they are experiencing the Spirit and the gifts, and therefore know him to be that LORD whom David foresaw at God's right hand. Their hope is that if Israel "turns again," their sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for them, even Jesus, whom the heaven must receive until the time of the restoration of all things. Such is the bearing of the "Petrine speeches" of Acts.

[1] Joel 2 : 28 f.; cf. Num. 11 : 29. In the Wisdom literature the gift of God in the messianic age is "the spirit of wisdom" (*Enoch* 42 : 2; 48 : 1; 49 : 1–3; 51 : 3; 61 : 7, 11). In the legalistic literature it is the spirit of obedience to the law. (*Jubilees* 1 : 24–26).

This, then, was the resurrection faith of Peter. God had raised up unto Israel one from among their brethren to be his Servant, sending him to bless them in turning every one of them away from his iniquities. Jesus' earthly career had fulfilled the prophecy of Moses: "One from among your brethren like unto me." Now the Servant had been "made both Lord and Christ."

In the light of these data let us return to our first question, and ask again: What was the essential content of that faith in Jesus which made all Christians one from the beginning despite all differences, and infused them with the tremendous dynamic that made conquest of the world? Surely we shall not find it in the mere revivification of an inanimate body. Mere return from the tomb of a lost friend and leader, however miraculous, however gladdening, could not have brought this gospel of the risen LORD. The revelation to Peter and them

that were with him was that Jesus was *glorified*. He was not in the underworld with the rest of the dead. He was not on the earth with the rest of the living. He was in heaven at the right hand of God, seated on the messianic "throne of glory," whence he should come again after the Great Repentance as the promised Christ. The scriptural proof may well be a later reënforcement, but the faith itself came first by "manifestation" of the risen Jesus, and this manifestation was such in character as to make the Scripture applicable: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet."

We have seen how throughout Pauline Epistles and narrative as well this resurrection faith is crystallized in the confession, Jesus is LORD. We misconceive this primitive resurrection faith if we approach it with the preconceptions begotten of cen-

turies of carrying back into Jesus' earthly life of things subsequently believed. What to us has become the period of the gospel was to Paul, and even to the Galilean disciples, the period preliminary to the gospel — what the Germans call its *Vorgeschichte.* Therefore Paul scarcely ever refers to it, and even those who had experienced it with Jesus never recorded it. The gospel began with the resurrection. The revelation given to Peter and "the twelve" was not that Jesus *had been* the Christ, or *had been* the Lord. They realized now that he *had been* the Son of God, as he had taught others to be. The revelation showed that he *was now* "the Lord," and the inference from it was that he *would be* "the Christ," when he returned from "the heavens."

This faith in Jesus as Lord implied on the one side the message of Jesus' earthly career. Sonship was a result of being "conformed to the image of God's Son" — a

result no otherwise to be attained than by having within "the mind which was also in Christ Jesus." On the other side this obtaining the mind of Christ was a work not of human but of divine power. It was a "metamorphosis" into the likeness of the glorified Lord, through the indwelling Spirit, whose presence was already manifest. They who "confessed with the mouth Jesus as Lord," must walk by the same rule, must assume his yoke, must learn of him, must "become imitators of God as beloved children, even as Christ also had loved them and given himself a sacrifice for them."[1] They who "believed in their heart that God had raised him from the dead" were also assured that a sanctification and a glorification awaited his "brethren" like that which God had given him.[2] Thus the exemplification in Jesus' life and teaching of

[1] Eph. 5: 1, 2.

[2] Rom. 8: 11, 29, 30; 10: 9; II Cor. 3: 18; Phil. 3: 21.

the principle of self-denying service, followed by the manifestation of him as Son of God with power, when "God highly exalted him and gave to him the name which is above every name," supplied a complete gospel, a perfect revelation of human duty and destiny. It was in the assured possession of that common two-fold gospel, the gospel *of* Jesus and the gospel *about* Jesus, that Paul could write: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all."

IV

BAPTISM AND THE BREAKING OF BREAD

We have seen how a comparison of the Pauline Epistles with the narrative sources enables us to clarify our conception of the historical process by which the first brotherhood of believers in Jesus as the Son of God was formed; we have also learned something from it regarding the contents of the primitive common faith. Our study of the Founding of the Church will not be complete without a review of the same sources, after the same method, in answer to the question: What were the primitive institutions of the Church, and how did they originate?

What has been already said may suffice regarding the very earliest development of Church organization. God had first of all

"energized in Peter unto an apostolate of the circumcision," even as in Paul "unto an apostolate to the Gentiles." The choice of "the twelve," however effected, the choice of James, the choice of "all the apostles," had been at least confirmed, perhaps originated, by the act of God. The risen Christ had been "manifested" to them. In Ephesians 4: 11–16, as in all the earlier writings, it is this divine side which occupies the whole field of vision in the appointment of every kind of church officer. The appointments were, as church historians say, *charismatic;* i. e., men were endowed by the Spirit with the "gift" for this or that form of service. The Holy Ghost "set them apart for the work" whereunto He had called them. Later the mechanism of human forms of government comes more and more into view. Civic methods are imitated in the Greek churches, synagogue methods in the Syrian. Democracy still

prevails everywhere, because brotherhood and the rule of service were fundamental in Christian thought; but officialism increases. The author of Acts presents from some ancient source in cc. 6–8 what he regards as the origin of the diaconate, the secondary order which Paul in Philippians 1: 1 associates with the "bishops," or "overseers." In Luke's day one of the principal functions of "deacons" was to "serve tables," providing for the daily common meal of the brotherhood, as tradition says Judas had done for the twelve,[1] and distributing to the "widows." The "widows" themselves in First Timothy 5: 3–16 have become the almoners. Hence the representations of Acts 6: 1–4. But the *source* employed by Luke in Acts 6–8 does not think of "the seven" as "deacons," or as "serving tables." They are "evangelists"; such by name in the primitive passage, Acts 21: 8,

[1] John 13: 29.

such in practice everywhere. So in all the matter of organization. As the growth of the Church required it, the Spirit furnished continually new "joints of supply." The "ministry of the new covenant" was not "of the letter"; it was not bound to ancient forms, it made itself new wine skins for the new wine. Elders, bishops, deacons, "widows," were instrumentalities developed as needed. The earliest time knew only "spiritual gifts" exercised for the common good.[1]

But besides the common faith and the common organization we find already in the Pauline Epistles two institutions, both of which are spoken of as dating from the very beginnings, one of which is declared to have been commanded by "the Lord" himself. They are, of course, the institutions of baptism and the "breaking of bread." Next to the "one Lord" and "one

[1] I Cor. 12–14.

faith," in Paul's pæan of the unity of the Church, comes the "one baptism." The breaking of bread was by its very name a "communion" of the body of Christ. How, then, did these rites originate; and what did the Church mean by them?

Baptism is to Paul always symbolical of the believer's death and resurrection with Christ. Immersion as the usual form (perhaps not the only one) is implied by the comparisons, "we are buried with him in baptism," "we were baptized unto Christ as Israel was baptized unto Moses in the Red Sea."[1] That the candidates were as a rule adults (perhaps not always) is implied in the signification. This includes always self-surrender, dedication. But we are expressly told that Christ did not baptize. It was a rite taken up by the Church after

[1] I. e., we came under the leadership of Christ as Israel came under the leadership of Moses in passing out through the Red Sea from the darkness and bondage of Egypt into the light and liberty of the desert wandering.

the resurrection, and to Paul was one of the things which had been merely adopted for their intrinsic value, not imposed by authority.[1] When and why was it taken up?

All forms of the Apostolic Commission emphasize the fact that it was a sending with authority to proclaim the *forgiveness of sins*. Two of the latest attach to this Commission, as part of the sending itself, from Jesus' own mouth, the command to baptize.[2] We see from Paul, that it can be called a command of Jesus only as a conviction "borne in" upon the earliest group of believers might be invested with the sanction of "the spirit of Jesus."[3] But even these later representations suffice to show that baptism was adopted at the very start as the rite of initiation into the brotherhood.

[1] I Cor. 1 : 17.

[2] Matt. 28 : 19; Mark 16 : 16.

[3] In Acts 16 : 7 we have an example of warnings through church "prophets" (cf. 20 : 23; 21 : 11) being referred to "the spirit of Jesus."

The reason lies in the very fact that what was sought in the new faith was the *forgiveness of sins.*

The priority of John the Baptist in the introduction of this rite is undisputed. The whole movement of Jesus to gather the lost sheep of Israel was begun "after John was shut up in prison." Jesus himself, and probably many of his disciples, had been baptized of John. He gave it as his authority when challenged for his right to proclaim "sonship" to the publicans and sinners, gave it as a sign "from heaven," that these had repented at "the baptism of John." And John's rite was indeed such a reversion to first principles of the old prophetic religion: "What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" It shows its anti-legalistic character by turning away from the whole apparatus of temple, and synagogue, and law, to seek a new mode of ap-

proach to God in the symbolism of nature itself. The baptism of John had been the voice of God saying: "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes." And when the publicans and sinners obeyed it, Jesus considered them nearer to doing the will of the Father than the sons who said, "I go, Sir," and went not.[1] He did not stop there. He believed that the sincere and penitent acceptance of the Father's terms implied the bestowal to the uttermost of the Father's blessing. Therefore when John was imprisoned, Jesus came into the thickest crowds of half-heathen, "Galilee of the Gentiles," and gathered the scattered sheep. And he not only bade them "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," but when they did repent, he added the assurance, "Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven"; and to the company that followed him: "Fear not,

[1] Cf. Matt. 21 : 23–32.

little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This was the work that had to recommence after the flock had once more been scattered, and Peter had gone back to his fishing. It was not to be expected that Peter would begin by baptizing all his fellow disciples who had not happened to be at the baptism of John. But it *was* natural that in choosing new disciples it should be "from them that have companied with us . . . from the baptism of John," [1] and that when they went up together to Jerusalem and formed a brotherhood, they should employ baptism "in the name of Jesus" as their rite of initiation in token of "the forgiveness of sins."

But baptism gained a new and unforeseen meaning from what occurred at this time. "When they were baptized, the Holy Ghost came upon them and they spake with

[1] Acts 1: 21, 22.

tongues." This was an experience so general, so universal, that baptism was not regarded as *Christian* baptism at all unless the baptized manifested the "gifts of the Spirit." The baptism of Jesus himself, an incident antecedent to their definite knowledge of him, was represented as accompanied by the coming of "the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost upon him."[1] Mere disciples who had believed and been baptized "unto John's baptism," without "receiving the Holy Ghost," were baptized over again "in the name of the Lord Jesus" after due instruction. And when Paul's hands had been laid upon them, they "spake with tongues and prophesied."[2] A saying of Jesus was recalled promising a greater matter than John's immersion in the waters of repentance. He had declared that the time

[1] The *Gospel of the Nazarenes.* The representation of Mark 1 : 11 and parallels has the same conception in less pronounced form.

[2] Acts 19 : 1–7.

would come when men would be flooded with the Spirit of God.[1]

It is because of this accompanying phenomenon of "the Spirit" that baptism signifies to Paul both death and resurrection. The immersion beneath the water is a "burial with Christ," because it had to be preceded by an act of dedication, of self-surrender, which is like Jesus' own "becoming obedient unto the death of the cross." In Paul's own case this self-surrender had been a moral death, a crucifixion to all his former world of hope and effort. As the believer was lifted from beneath the surface into the light of day, the Spirit came upon him, and involuntarily "he spake with tongues and prophesied." To Paul this was resurrection to a life that was not his own, but Christ living in him. Paul might think

[1] Earliest form, Acts 11 : 16; cf. 1 : 5. Adapted in Mark 1 : 8. The original saying would be in line with current anticipations of the coming Kingdom (see above, p. 57) and with Jesus' own thought, Matt. 12 · 43–45; Luke 17 : 21.

the form, the mere material rite, a matter of indifference; but the thing symbolized was to him the most vital thing in Christianity. "As many as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Until this living Lord, who "is the Spirit," had mastered their lives and made them his own, men had no hope, they were "yet in their sins." Fortunately Paul had the wisdom, the moral insight, to realize that the mere mastering of bodily functions by "the Spirit," resulting in the spectacular gifts of "tongues" and "prophecies," were temporary and subordinate. Paul himself was endowed with these gifts to an exceptional degree;[1] but his moral sobriety taught him that the gifts which "abide" come from a divine mastery of the inner springs of the will,[2] when "the mind which was in Christ Jesus" lays hold upon a man's inmost soul and turns it to "faith and hope and love."[3]

[1] I Cor. 14 : 18. [2] Phil. 2 : 13. [3] I Cor. 13 : 13.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

We have seen that the author of Acts connects the "outpouring of the Spirit" with a definite day, the fiftieth day from the "great sabbath" of Passover,[1] a "first day of the week" designated "Pentecost" for this reason, a feast which according to current Jewish opinion commemorated the giving of the law from Sinai in a stream of fire which divided "like sparks from an anvil" into seventy voices, one in each of the seventy tongues of the nations.[2] Luke has been much influenced by this Jewish legend of the giving of the Law in relating the origin of the Christian gift of "tongues"; but we have no need to question the accuracy of his date, nor the general effect of the occurrence. Baptism, as we saw, must have begun at about this time as a rite of initiation into the brotherhood formed when

[1] Lev. 23 : 16.

[2] A midrash derived from Deut. 33 : 2, and traceable in Philo and the Talmud.

they first met in numbers sufficient to warrant formal organization; and this was surely in Jerusalem, and most apt to be at the feast of Pentecost. Moreover, we have evidence — later, indeed, than the Pauline Epistles, yet barely later — of the observance by Christians of the "first day of the week" as "the Lord's day," [1] and this corroborates the idea that Pentecost does indeed mark the first appearance of these psychic phenomena. For, notwithstanding the traditional opinion, based on the Markan story of the women's discovery of the empty sepulchre on "the first day of the week," that the observance of "the Lord's day" rests on this event, the real relation is probably the reverse. The Church had its "Lord's day" before the story of the women had ever come to light. Even after that it did not always consider that the resurrection had taken place "on the third

[1] Acts 20 : 7; Rev. 1 : 10.

day," or "after three days." It remained a very debatable question just when the resurrection and when the ascension had taken place. The resurrection *faith* began with the "manifestation" to Peter, perhaps "after six days,"[1] perhaps still longer after the Friday of the crucifixion. It cannot have been so early as "the third day." Paul believed that the glorification of Jesus' body had been "on the third day," but this, as he expressly says, was an inference from "scripture," perhaps Hosea 6 : 2, perhaps the law of "firstfruits," with which he connects the resurrection in First Corinthians 15 : 20.[2] If the observance of "the Lord's day" had been as primeval as we have reason to think, and been based upon the women's discovery of the empty tomb, it would be incredible that Paul in summing up the com-

[1] This may be the significance of the dating of the Revelation to Peter, Mark 9 : 2, and parallels.

[2] Cf. Lev. 23 : 11.

mon gospel of the resurrection should make no mention whatever of this story, or that it should appear so late and with the variations that we actually find. If the tradition of "the day of the Lord" is as early as we think, it goes back beyond that of the women's discovery of the empty tomb, goes back to the triumphant manifestation to the brotherhood expectantly assembled in Jerusalem, of Jesus as LORD, on that great "first day of the week," fifty days after the fateful sabbath of Passover, some forty after the manifestations had been given "to Cephas" and "the twelve." Then, at Pentecost, perhaps in conjunction with the adoption of the rite of baptism, "the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Scriptural reasons were not hard to find after this for dating other "manifestations," including the late-appearing story of the women's vision of angels, on "the first day of the week."

Like baptism, the "breaking of bread" was a rite older than the Church. In its simplest form it was just the common meal, at which Jesus had presided as house-father, breaking the bread with prayer, and distributing it to his household and their guests. As such it went back in origin to the days of the Galilean ministry. Thus Jesus could be "recognized in the breaking of the bread" even by disciples who had not been present at the last supper. This common meal of the brotherhood, not widely different in form and purpose from the common meals of the "neighborhoods" of Pharisees, or the banquets of social and religious clubs among the Greeks, became the so-called Agapé, or "love-feast," of the primitive Church. The name was appropriate because it gave opportunity, when not abused, as at Corinth, by the spirit of clique and aristocracy,[1] to help the weak,

[1] I Cor. 11 : 21.

feed the hungry, promote the real sense of brotherhood. In the early days of devotion, when the Church was first formed in Jerusalem, this "breaking of bread" together, in the name, and after the example, of Jesus, was not only a "daily" lesson of the spirit of brotherhood, but a matter of practical sustenance to the "widows" and the poor. We may realize something of the part it played among the primitive disciples when we take up the Gospels in which they have embodied their beliefs, institutions, and practices, and see how no less than six different versions of the Feeding the Multitude are incorporated, each dwelling minutely on the whole procedure of the seating of the assembly in orderly "eating companies," the breaking and blessing of the food by the presiding officer, the distribution of it by his subordinates, and the "gathering of the fragments" for subsequent distribution to the poor. The "love-feast," rightly con-

ducted, was a worthy institution by which to perpetuate, not in outward form alone, but in spirit also, the brotherhood of Jesus.

But Paul's ordering of the Agapé in First Corinthians 11 : 17–34 does not stop with his rebuke of the selfishness exhibited at the fraternal meal. He goes on to speak of a rite explicitly declared to have been instituted by Jesus himself on "the night in which he was betrayed," and expressly for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of his martyrdom. Jesus' last parable had been an adaptation of the bread and wine of the meal in which for the last time he had performed the well-known rite,[1] as tokens of his supreme gift. Henceforth when they broke their bread together they should take it in memory of him, because his body was about to be given, his blood about to be

[1] Gospel criticism reveals the fact that this last meal was not the passover, but the so-called *qiddush* of the night before. See *Beginnings of Gospel Story*, pp. 195–205, and note above (p. 13).

shed, for their sakes, as he now gave them the broken bread and poured forth the wine. Thus there was added to the existent fraternal meal a special "memorial of the Lord's death," a "communion of the body and blood of the Lord." In Jesus' intention it had been simply a "memorial" of him. As often as they performed together the rite of the blessing and breaking of bread and blessing of the cup, they would remember that his death had borne out the principle of his life. As he had bidden them freely pour out all the common stock before the multitude when he had made them all his guests in Galilee, so now with his life-blood. It was given for the "many" in the cause of the kingdom. Paul, after his manner, has infused the memorial with a mystic sense derived from his own inner experience of death and resurrection with Christ. To Paul the "communion of the Lord's body" is in the strict sense a "sac-

rament" in which the believer becomes mystically united to the Lord, so that to the worthy partaker it is almost the "medicine of immortality" which Ignatius declares it, and to the unworthy an actual cause of sickness and death.[1] We have no need to pursue the development of the rite through its later stages. It is easy to distinguish what Paul "received of the Lord"[2] from his personal application of it. Jesus did not institute a sacrament. He did give his followers a "memorial" of his teaching and example. It has *become* a "sacrament" through Christian experience. Since the time of Paul — nay, since the time, perhaps, when "the twelve" first gathered at the astounding summons, "The Lord is risen, and hath appeared unto Simon," and

[1] I Cor. 11 : 30.

[2] I Cor. 11 : 23. The preposition is *apo* = "as coming from," not *para*, which might apply to direct or indirect transmission. The contents of the statement, simple matter of historical fact, show that the reference is not to revelation.

they who were come together were themselves made conscious of the presence of the risen Jesus "in the breaking of the bread," [1] men have found this "fellowship (communion) of his sufferings" a means of becoming "conformed unto his death" and thereby "attaining unto the resurrection from the dead." [2] The sacramental significance of the Church's rites is an outgrowth of her own experience. But already the little brotherhood that assembled in Jerusalem had the token, as they had also the assurance, of the forgiveness of sins, when they baptized "in the name of Jesus." When they met together for "the breaking

[1] This trait is seldom wanting from the older references to the first manifestation to "the twelve" and may be authentic. We find it referred to in Acts 10:41; 1:4 (?); Luke 24:43; John 21:12–14; 20:19 (?). In the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which makes the manifestation "to James" the first, Jesus "called for a table and bread, and said: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from the dead."

[2] Phil. 3:10, 11.

of bread," they had also a "communion" of the Lord's body, a "memorial" of him who had "suffered for them, leaving them an example that they should follow his steps."[1]

We have sought to trace, simply and briefly, but with unreserved application of the most untrammeled criticism, the story of the Founding of the Church, the origin of its membership, its faith in the risen Christ, its institutions. It will be said that we have made it the sole work of Peter, a Galilean fisherman, acting on the impulse of what he was pleased to regard as a "manifestation" to him of his old-time Leader, as the glorified Son of God.

In a sense, that is true. Peter was the founder of the Church, as Jesus was the Founder of the kingdom of God. The humbler the originator, the more sure are we that his work was just what it has always pur-

[1] I Pet. 2 : 21.

ported to be: the awakening, the reincarnation, of the spirit of Jesus. If anything has been made clear by our study, it is that nothing went to the building of the Church which was not placed there in loyal perpetuation of the teaching and example of Jesus. Its faith, its principle of order, its institutions, its work, were all from him. Even its leaders and its members were his old-time companions and fellow-workers in the gathering of the lost sheep. What else could they do? Other foundation could no man lay than that was laid, which was Christ Jesus.

And what of Peter's "manifestation"?— Purposely we have refrained from raising the question so often raised concerning this fundamental starting-point of all: was it subjective, or objective? Historical criticism does not furnish the means of determining whether that manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God with power, the revelation of Peter, was effected by the direct intervention of

the risen spirit of Jesus, surmounting all the obstacles between that unseen world and this in the supreme effort of redeeming love; or whether the influence was indirect, a return to Peter's mind, lost in grief and despair, of all that his companionship with Jesus had meant of devotion and of faith in God, a rushing back of these amid the old scenes of his first call to be "a fisher of men," with such power of conviction as carried reason out of itself into the realm of ecstasy and vision. Either is possible. There seems no present likelihood of our ever obtaining decisive information as to which was the historic fact. We must go back further yet for the ultimate basis of our faith. We must rest it where Paul does when he places Peter's revelation in the same category with his own as "the inworking of God," manifesting his Son "in" him, "declaring" Jesus to be "the Son of God with power." Whether by objective intervention of a personal risen

spirit of Jesus, or by indirect influence of a past companionship, such as can be given also to "those who have not seen and yet have believed," this is what Jesus eternally *is;* and as such God is continually revealing him, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

There is then a sense in which the Church has a greater Founder than Peter, or even Jesus himself. It was the work of One who "worketh all things after the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory," who "were sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory."

For not like kingdoms of the world
Thy holy Church, O God!
Though earthquake shocks are threatening her,
And tempests are abroad;

Unshaken as the eternal hills,
Immovable she stands,
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A house not made by hands.

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EDITED BY
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